AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A method for processing envelopes containing a transaction of one or more documents, comprising the steps of:
feeding envelopes from an input bin into a transport path;
opening the envelopes along an edge;
manually extracting a transaction from an opened envelope;
manually feeding the extracted transaction to an imaging station wherein the step of manually feeding the transaction to an imaging station comprises dropping the removed document toward a transport; and
scanning the extracted transaction to create image data for the transaction.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 comprising the step of storing the image data on a non-volatile image medium.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17 comprising the step of determining whether the transaction is extracted from the envelope, and controlling advancement of the envelope in response to the determination of whether the transaction is extracted.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain optical image data corresponding to the documents.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic image data corresponding to the documents.

22. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the step of imaging comprises the

steps of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic and optical image data, and the method comprises the step of analyzing the optical and magnetic image data to verify the accuracy of the image data.

23. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the step of opening the envelopes comprises cutting the envelopes along at least an edge, and the method comprises the step of pulling apart a front face of the envelope from a back face of the envelope to present the transaction to an operator for extraction.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 comprising the step of pulling one face of the envelope away from a second face of the envelope while the envelope is retained at the pre-determined position.

25. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:
an input bin for receiving a stack of envelopes containing a document;
a transport operable to convey an envelope along an envelope path;
a cutter for cutting an edge of the envelopes;
an extractor positioned along the envelope path and configured to open each envelope while the envelope is stopped along the envelope path and present the document to an operator for manual removal;
a sensor operable to detect removal of the document from the envelope;
a system controller operable to control the transport in response to a signal from the sensor indicative of the document being removed from the envelope; and
an imaging device for scanning the extracted document to create a set of image data; wherein the imaging device comprises an input configured to receive one or more documents manually fed to the input.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 comprising a non-volatile storage medium for receiving and storing the image data.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the imaging device comprises an optical imaging device for obtaining optical image data corresponding to the extracted documents.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the imaging device comprises a magnetic imaging device for obtaining magnetic image data corresponding to the extracted documents.

30. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:
an input bin for receiving a stack of envelopes containing document;
a cutter for cutting an edge of an envelope from the stack;
an extractor configured to move a face of the envelope away from the other face of the envelope to present the contents of the envelope to an operator for manual removal;
a transport for transporting the envelope along an envelope path.
a system controller operable to control the transport while the envelope face is moved away to present the contents for manual removal;
an imaging device for scanning the extracted documents to create a set of image data; and
a second transport configured to receive documents manually fed to the second transport and transport the documents to the imaging device.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 30 comprising a non-volatile storage medium for receiving and storing the image data.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 30 wherein the imaging device comprises an optical imaging device for obtaining optical image data corresponding to the extracted documents.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 30 wherein the imaging device

comprises a magnetic imaging device for obtaining magnetic image data corresponding to the extracted documents.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 30 wherein the system controller is operable to control the transport to automatically advance the envelope away from the extractor after the contents are removed from the envelope.

36. (Previously Presented) A method for processing envelopes containing transactional documents, comprising the steps of:
feeding an envelope from a stack of envelopes in an input bin into a transport path;
severing the envelope along an edge;
stopping the forward advancement of the envelope;
opening the envelope by moving one face of the envelope away from the other face of the envelope while the envelope is stopped;
extracting a document from the opened envelope while the envelope is stopped;
manually feeding the extracted document to a transport;
transporting the extracted document along the transport to an imaging station adjacent the pre-determined position; and
scanning the extracted documents to create image data for the documents.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 comprising the step of storing the image data on a non-volatile image medium.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 comprising the steps of determining whether the transaction is extracted from the envelope, and controlling advancement of the envelope in response to the determination of whether the transaction is extracted.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain optical image data corresponding to the documents.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic image data corresponding to the documents.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein the step of imaging comprises the steps of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic and optical image data, and the method comprises the step of analyzing the optical and magnetic image data to verify the accuracy of the image data.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein the step of transporting the document to an imaging station comprises feeding the document to an input nip that engages the document and conveys the document toward the imaging station.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein the step of transporting the document toward an imaging station comprises dropping the document toward a second transport that conveys the document toward the imaging station.

44-58. (Canceled)

59. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:
a transport operable to convey an envelope along an envelope path;
a cutter for cutting an edge of the envelopes;
an extractor positioned along the envelope path, comprising a pair of opposing arm configured to pull open the envelopes to present the content to the operator and configured to open each envelope and present the content to an operator for manual removal;
a sensor operable to detect removal of content from the envelope;
a system controller operable to control the transport to maintain the envelope at the extractor until the system controller receives a signal from the sensor

indicative of content being removed from the envelope; and

an imaging device for scanning the extracted content to create a set of image data.

60. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 59 comprising a transport configured to receive an extracted document that is dropped toward the transport and convey the document toward the imaging device.

61. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 59 comprising a non-volatile storage medium for receiving and storing the image data.

62. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 59 wherein the imaging device comprises an optical imaging device for obtaining optical image data corresponding to the extracted content.

63. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 59 wherein the imaging device comprises a magnetic imaging device for obtaining magnetic image data corresponding to the extracted content.

64. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 64 wherein the content comprises one or more documents and the apparatus comprises an image transport for conveying extracted content to the imaging device, and the image transport comprises an input configured to receive a document manually fed to the input.

65. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 59 wherein the system controller is operable to control the transport to retain the envelope at a pre-defined position until the system controller receives a signal from the sensor indicative of the document being removed from the envelope.

66. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for processing mail, comprising:
an input bin for receiving a stack of envelopes containing contents;
a cutter for cutting an edge of an envelope from the stack;

an extractor comprising a pair of opposing arm configured to pull open the envelopes to present the content to the operator;

a transport for transporting the envelope along an envelope path.

a system controller operable to control the transport so that the envelope is maintained at the extractor while the extractor presents the content for manual removal; and

an imaging device for scanning the extracted content to create a set of image data.

67. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 66 comprising a transport configured to receive an extracted document that is dropped toward the transport and convey the document toward the imaging device.

68. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 66 comprising a non-volatile storage medium for receiving and storing the image data.

69. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 66 wherein the imaging device comprises an optical imaging device for obtaining optical image data corresponding to the extracted content.

70. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 66 wherein the imaging device comprises a magnetic imaging device for obtaining magnetic image data corresponding to the extracted content.

71. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 66 wherein the system controller is operable to control the transport to automatically advance the envelope away from the extractor after the content is removed from the envelope.

72. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 64 wherein the content comprises one or more documents and the apparatus comprises an image transport for conveying extracted content to the imaging device, and the image transport comprises an input configured to receive a document manually fed to the input.

73. (Previously Presented) A method for processing envelopes containing a transaction of one or more documents, comprising the steps of:
feeding envelopes from an input bin into a transport path;
opening the envelopes along an edge;
extracting a transaction from an opened envelope;
retaining the envelopes at a pre-determined position during the step of extracting;
manually feeding the transaction to a transport;
transporting the transaction along the transport to an imaging station adjacent the pre-determined position; and
scanning the extracted transaction to create image data for the transaction.

74. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73 comprising the step of storing the image data on a non-volatile image medium.

75. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73 comprising the step of determining whether the transaction is extracted from the envelope, and retaining the envelope at the pre-determined position in response to the determination of whether the transaction is extracted.

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain optical image data corresponding to the documents.

77. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic image data corresponding to the documents.

78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73 wherein the step of imaging comprises the steps of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic and optical image data, and the method comprises the step of analyzing the optical and

magnetic image data to verify the accuracy of the image data.

79. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 78 wherein the step of opening the envelopes comprises cutting the envelopes along at least an edge, and the method comprises the step of pulling apart a front face of the envelope from a back face of the envelope to present the transaction to an operator for extraction.

80. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 78 comprising the step of pulling one face of the envelope away from a second face of the envelope while the envelope is retained at the pre-determined position.

81. Cancelled.

82. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the input of the imaging device is configured to receive a document dropped toward the image transport.

83. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 30 wherein the image transport is configured to receive a document dropped toward the image transport.